

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01  
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PC-01  
AID-05 DHA-02 SCA-01 SCS-03 IGA-02 EB-08 SY-05  
/103 W

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O P 020900Z AUG 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9012  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY  
USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 366

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGUI 1614

DEPT ALSO FOR PEACE CORPS & AID

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, CT, US  
SUBJ: US-CAE RELATIONS

REF: STATE 178800

SUMMARY: EMPEROR BOKASSA LISTENED IMPASSIVELY TO MY PRESENTATION  
OF USG CONCERNS RE ALLEGATIONS OF COUP PLOTTING, JOURNALISTS'  
DETENTION AND PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER EXPULSION AND STATEMENT OF  
NEW DESIRE FOR COOPERATIVE BILATERAL RELATIONS. WITHOUT ADDRESSING  
ANY OF MY POINTS HE ACCUSED USG OF TRYING TO "ELIMINATE" SMALL  
COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND THROUGH JOURNALISTS OF HEAPING ABUSE ON  
HIM AND HIS FAMILY. STORM SIGNALS ARE UP FOR USG-GOCAE RELATIONS.  
END SUMMARY

1. IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF GLACIAL FORMALITY EMPEROR BOKASSA RECEIVED  
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ME AT BERENGO ON THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 1, LESS THAN 24 HOURS  
AFTER MY RETURN TO POST. COURT MINISTER FRANCK AND DCM SAT IN  
BUT DID NOT TAKE NOTES. BOKASSA THROUGHOUT MY PRESENTATION STARED  
FIXEDLY AT THE FLOOR AND REACTED TO NONE OF MY POINTS EITHER  
POSITIVE OR CRITICAL.

2. AFTER BEING USHERED INTO BOKASSA'S PRESENCE I BEGAN BY STATING

THAT WASHINGTON HAD ASKED ME TO RETURN FROM LEAVE TO REVIEW WITH HIM THE STATE OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND SOME OF OUR SPECIFIC CONCERNS ARISING FROM RECENT EVENTS. I SAID THAT WE WISHED TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS IN THE SAME SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND OPENNESS WHICH HAD CHARACTERIZED THEM IN THE PAST. I WISHED TO DISCUSS WITH HIM WAYS OF AVOIDING PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE.

3. I THEN TOLD HIM THAT I WAS AUTHORIZED TO GIVE HIM SOLEMN ASSURANCES ON BEHALF OF THE USG THAT IT HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN THE COUP D'ETAT ATTEMPT OF FEBRUARY 1976. THE EMPLOYEE OF THE EMBASSY WHO HAD BEEN IMPLICATED WAS NEITHER AN AMERICAN NOR A DIPLOMAT AND WAS NOT IN ANY WAY ACTING FOR THE US GOVERNMENT. THE USG ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES. WE WERE DEEPLY TROUBLED BY BOKASSA'S RECENT ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE US.

4. I SAID THAT WE COULD ONLY MAINTAIN OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP BY WORKING TOGETHER. TO CONTINUE OUR PROGRESS WE NEEDED HIS SUPPORT AND THAT OF HIS GOVERNMENT. IT WAS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE ARREST OF THE YOUNG PCV HAD DISTURBED US. WE HOPED THAT THE INCIDENT DID NOT MEAN THAT THE PC WAS NO LONGER WELCOME IN THE CAE. IN THE EVENT OF FUTURE INCIDENTS IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT WE COLLABORATE TO RESOLVE THEM IN A SATISFACTORY MANNER. I CITED THE US-CAE PEACE CORPS AGREEMENT, WHICH HE HAD SIGNED IN NOVEMBER 1966, AND NOTED THAT IT PROVIDED FOR CONSULTATION BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS ON ALL QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE VOLUNTEERS. UNFOR-  
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TUNATELY THERE HAD NOT BEEN ANY CONSULTATION IN THE CASE OF THE VOLUNTEER'S ARREST. I ASKED BOKASSA IF HE HAD ANY SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE CONCERNING THE COMPORTMENT OR LIFESTYLE OF THE PCVS. THEY WORKED FOR THE GOCAE AND WE WISHED TO BE RESPONSIVE TO HIS CONCERNS. I SAID I HOPED TO VISIT THE NEW VOLUNTEERS AT THEIR TRAINING SITE IN M'BAIKI AND WOULD LIKE TO PASS ON ANY SUGGESTIONS HE MIGHT HAVE.

5. I THEN WENT ON TO THE QUESTION OF THE JOURNALISTS NOTING THAT I PERSONALLY AS WELL AS THE USG REGRETTED THE OUTCOME OF THEIR VISIT. I WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY WHAT THEY HAD WRITTEN SINCE THERE WERE OBVIOUSLY ERRORS OF FACT AND INTERPRETATION. THEY WERE NONETHELESS PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS REPRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL RENOWN. WE HAD BEEN PROFOUNDLY DISTURBED BY THE ABRUPT WAY IN WHICH THEIR DETENTION HAD BEEN HANDLED AND BY THE LACK OF CONSULAR ACCESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CUSTOMARY USAGE AND PRACTICE.

6. I SAID THAT WE HAD ENCOURAGED THE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS TO VISIT THE CAE TO GET A MORE EXACT AND BALANCED PICTURE OF THE SITUATION. WE ALSO ENCOURAGED THEM TO CONTACT THE MINISTER OF ORIENTATION AND I HAD MENTIONED THEIR VISIT INFORMALLY IN ADVANCE TO THE

PRIME MINISTER, IMPERIAL PRESS MINISTER TETEA AND ORIENTATION MINISTER YANGONGO, IN THE HOPE OF AVOIDING THE VERY PROBLEMS WHICH EVENTUALLY AROSE. BOTH THE JOURNALISTS' CASE AND THAT OF THE PCV RAISED THE QUESTION OF CONSULAR ACCESS. WE WISHED TO AVOID SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE AND IN ORDER TO DO SO WE WOULD BE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE A BILATERAL CONSULAR AGREEMENT WITH THE CAE SIMILAR TO THOSE WE HAD WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

8. IN CLOSING I SAID THAT I WISHED TO TOUCH ON ONE FINAL ISSUE. AT THE REQUEST OF THE HEAD OF ASSOCIATED PRESS AND OF GOLDSMITH'S FAMILY WE HOPED THAT BOKASSA WOULD INTERVENE IN THE GOLDSMITH CASE. I SAID I RECOGNIZED HE WAS NOT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN AND WE DID NOT HAVE ANY JURIDICAL STANDING IN THIS MATTER. NONETHELESS HE HAD A HEART CONDITION AND HIS FAMILY WAS VERY DISTURBED ABOUT  
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HIS HEALTH.

9. AT THIS POINT SOME 15 MINUTES INTO THE AUDIENCE AS I WAS ABOUT TO SUM UP, I WAS CUT OFF IN FULL FLOW BY COURT MINISTER FRANCK WHO ANNOUNCED THAT THE AUDIENCE WAS OVER. BOKASSA THEN TURNED TO ME FOR THE FIRST TIME AND SAID, "I HAVE NO REPLY TO MAKE TO YOU". HE DID, HOWEVER, GO ON TO COMPLAIN BITTERLY OF JOURNALISTIC ATTACKS ON HIM, HIS FATHER AND HIS FAMILY. AS

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AID-05 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 IGA-02 EB-08 SY-05

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O P 020900Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9013

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PRIORITY  
USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 367

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGUI 1614

DEPT ALSO FOR PEACE CORPS & AID

AN AFRICAN HE COULD NOT TOLERATE THESE ATTACKS. LET OUR JOURNALISTS STAY HOME TO WRITE ABOUT THE USA AND NOT COME TO CENTRAL AFRICA, HE SAID. HE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHAT BUSINESS THE PCV HAD SNOOPING AROUND HIS RESIDENCE AT KOLONGO. HE HAD SHOWN HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR THE PEACE CORPS SOME YEARS AGO ON A RIVER BOAT TRIP TO MONGOUMBA. THE PEACE CORPS COULD NOT BUT BE AFFECTED BY RECENT EVENTS. HE SAID QUESTIONS OF A JOURNALIST'S HEALTH AND FAMILY WERE NOT RELEVANT IN THE LIGHT OF THE VOLUMINOUS DOCUMENTATION ABOUT HIS ACTIVITIES WHICH HAD BEEN PRESENTED TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON JULY 21. A GREAT POWER LIKE THE US COULD NOT COME TO AFRICA AND "ELIMINATE" SMALL POWERS LIKE THE CAE. IT WOULD NOT SUCCEED IN THIS EFFORT. HIS WAS A SOVERIGN COUNTRY. I INTERJECTED WITH A BRIEF BUT CATEGORIC DENIAL OF ANY USG DESIRE TO ELIMINATE THE CAE BEFORE MINISTER FRANCK HUSTLED ME OUT.

10. COMMENT: THE STORM SIGNALS ARE UP FOR US-CAE RELATIONS.  
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BOKASSA WAS IN AS STEELY AND UNCOMPROMISING A MOOD AS I HAVE EVER SEEN HIM. HE OBVIOUSLY IS OBSESSED BY PRESS STORIES, PARTICULARLY THE LAMB ARTICLE WHICH HE HAS ONLY RECENTLY SEEN. HE SEES THEM AS A CALCULATED ATTEMPT, PRESUMABLY WITH USG TACIT ENCOURAGEMENT SINCE WE URGED THE JOURNALISTS TO COME TO BANGUI, TO DENIGRATE HIM. HE CONTINUES TO SUSPECT US OF WISHING TO OVERTHROW HIM AND HIS REGIME. I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD ALREADY DECIDED ON CERTAIN ACTIONS EITHER VIZ A VIZ GOLDSMITH OR THE USG AND THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO GIVE AWAY HIS HAND BY RESPONDING TO ANY OF MY POINTS.

11. WE HAVE NOW SAID OUR PIECE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE EMPIRE. I WILL RENEW CONSULAR ACCESS POINTS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, FOR THE TIME BEING WE HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO KEEP OUR HEADS DOWN AND WAIT. IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE ADDITIONAL DEMARCHES TO BOKASSA WILL BE DIFFICULT. OUR LOCUS STANDI IN THE GOLDSMITH CASE REMAINS UNACCEPTED AND IT IS THEREFORE NOW EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR THE BRITISH TO STEP UP THE PRESSURE AND PERHAPS THE LEVEL OF THEIR DEMARCHES.

12. IT IS, OF COURSE, POSSIBLE THAT BOKASSA'S SUSPICIONS AND ATTACKS ON US WILL BLOW OVER AS THEY DID IN 1976, BUT NOT, I FEAR, UNTIL THE GOLDSMITH CASE HAS REACHED ITS DENOUMENT. BARKAN TOLD US JULY 30 THAT HE THOUGHT BOKASSA MIGHT BE CONSIDERING SOME SORT OF TRIAL OF GOLDSMITH. BOKASSA MAY ALSO WANT TO TRACK

DOWN SOURCES OF GOLDSMITH'S AND LAMB'S ARTICLES WHICH INCLUDED  
DIPLOMATS, PCVS, BUSINESSMEN AND MISSIONARIES. I SHOULD NOT BE  
SURPRISED IF HE STRIKES OUT AT ONE OR OTHER OF THESE GROUPS  
WHERE WE ARE REPRESENTED. WE WILL, OF COURSE, BE ALERT TO ANY  
CHANGE IN THE WIND, BUT IN THE MEANTIME WE WILL KEEP AS LOW A  
PROFILE AS IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR ON-GOING ACTIVITIES. WE WILL  
NOT, HOWEVER, NEGLECT TO HAMMER HOME AT OTHER LEVELS OF THE GOCAE  
OUR SERIOUS CONCERNS AND OUR DESIRE FOR CONTINUED COLLABORATIVE  
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RELATIONS.  
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## Message Attributes

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